



### •References

• a source of information (as a book or passage) to which a reader is referred

DEFINITION

- Provides background information
- Allows the researcher to compare and contrast the work of others in relation to his own study
- Gives soundness and credibility to the study

IMPORTANCE

### •References

- Conduct a thorough literature search during protocol preparation
- Give credit to previously published work
- Avoidance of plagiarism
- Quote a limited number of relevant and current references
- Restricted to those which have a direct bearing on the presented research

MANDATORY

### References

#### INTRODUCTION

Must give sufficient background information on the topic being presented

Quote relevant works by others  
Must not miss out on any important previous work

#### DISCUSSION

Author's result should be compared and contrasted with previous work

Conflicting findings from other published work should be highlighted and differences discussed  
Comparison with similar findings from others should be included  
Authors should evaluate the original sources

### •Author's responsibilities

- ✓Accountable for the source of their references
- ✓Properly cite the reference
- ✓Verify the reference against the original document
- ✓Check none of the references are retracted articles
- ✓Ideally all references should be easily accessible and retrievable
- ✓Check reference format/style of journal being submitted to

### •Notes on References

Abstracts from conference proceedings or journal supplements should Not be used

Some journals prefer articles listed in Pubmed

"personal communication" should be avoided unless it provides essential information, if unavoidable person and date of communication should be cited; written permission and accuracy from source be submitted

Papers that have been accepted but not yet published may be listed as "in press"; authors should have proof that these papers have been accepted

- Info from manuscripts which have been submitted but not yet accepted may be labeled “unpublished observations”
- Beware of using websites, state the date when the website was accessed
- Aim to stick to reputable academic, institutional and professional sources

## •Major Reference Formats

### HARVARD SYSTEM

- A. List of references in alphabetical order
- B. References quoted in text: surname of author (s) and publication year listed
- E.g. Ng (2007) showed that...

### VANCOUVER SYSTEM

- List of references: numbered consecutively in chronologic order of quotation in text
- References quoted in text: identified by Arabic numbers (superscripts)

### Box 2. Examples of minor variations in reference style among different journals:

#### Singapore Medical Journal

Chaloeykitti L, Muttarak M, Ng KH. Artifacts in mammography: ways to identify and overcome them. *Singapore Med J* 2006; 47:634-41.

#### Annals of Surgery

Chaloeykitti L, Muttarak M, Ng KH. Artifacts in mammography: ways to identify and overcome them. *Singapore Med J* 2006; 47:634-641.

#### Bulletin of the World Health Organization

Chaloeykitti L, Muttarak M, Ng KH. Artifacts in mammography: ways to identify and overcome them. *Singapore Med J* 2006;47:634-41. PMID: 16810441

#### Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine

Chaloeykitti L, Muttarak M, Ng KH. Artifacts in mammography: ways to identify and overcome them. *Singapore Med J* 2006;47:634-41

#### World Journal of Surgical Oncology

Chaloeykitti L, Muttarak M, Ng KH: **Artifacts in mammography: ways to identify and overcome them.** *Singapore Med J* 2006, 47:634-641.

- Chapter in a book
- Meltzer PS, Kallioniemi A, Trent JM. Chromosome alterations in human solid tumors. In: Vogelstein B, Kinzler KW, editors. *The genetic basis of human cancer*. New York: McGraw-Hill; 2002. p. 93-113.
- Conference proceedings
- Harnden P, Joffe JK, Jones WG, editors. *Germ cell tumours V. Proceedings of the 5th Germ Cell Tumour Conference*; 2001 Sep 13-15; Leeds, UK. New York: Springer; 2002.

## •More notes on References

**All references must be complete prior to acceptance of a manuscript.**



**Examples of commonly lacking information:**

- Names of publishers (for books and proceedings) and their locations.
- Proceedings require the same information as other books.
- Inclusive page numbers or (for books) chapters.
- Complete journal names (**no abbreviations unless part of actual title**).
- Journal volume and issue numbers (or months).
- Locations of companies, universities, and societies in reports and papers.

• **International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Sample References**

- The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors offers guidance to authors in its Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals publication.
- The recommended style for references is based on the National Information Standards Organization NISO Z39.29-2005 (R2010) Bibliographic References as adapted by the National Library of Medicine for its databases. Details are in Citing Medicine.

[http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform\\_requirements.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html)

• **Common problems with references:**

- Inaccurate quoting of references.
- Omission of key and relevant references.
- Failure to give credit to others, i.e. plagiarism.
- Preferential quoting of references.
- Source of previous data not credited, e.g. in graphs, diagrams, tables.
- Failure to format references exactly according to the target journal's instructions to authors.

**References****Common errors:**

1. Improper citation style or reference format
2. Incomplete reference information
3. Using a reference inappropriately (eg, including a reference that does not accurately support the statement being made)
4. Using outdated references and/or ignoring landmark studies
5. Using too many or too few references
6. Using inappropriate references for biomedical journals (eg, Wikipedia, magazines, etc)

• **Take home points:**

1. Ensure that all references are accurately cited.
2. Include only relevant references and be sure to have read all the references quoted.
3. Ideally, cite journal articles listed in PubMed and other recognised bibliographic databases.
4. Adhere exactly to the instructions to authors of the target journal.

